2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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grouped together in battle, and still eat together ceremoniously, e.g. at mourning feasts. The *kwanyireth* have their foreheads scarred in the same manner as commoners. Lines of scar marks are also made on the breast, across the shoulder blade, and two rectangular masses above the umbilicus; these are considered to have no tribal significance but are done for the sake of adornment and are said to be admired by the opposite sex.

We are indebted to Mr. Heasty for a note on Shilluk customs, which seem to indicate that the milk avoidances of the Nilotes are dependent on fear of contamination associated with the sexual act.

A young woman does not drink milk under any circumstances, though a woman who is nursing a baby may, as do old women past the reproductive age. Only small boys herd the cattle and milk them, for once a boy has reached maturity there is the danger that he may have had sexual contact, when if he milked, or handled manure, or even walked among the cattle in their pens, he would cause them to become sterile. These beliefs are held so strongly that a child who goes to his neighbours to drink milk must have a bath before he returns home, lest milk might adhere to him, be mixed with food, and be eaten by someone who was unclean. If a man has had sexual relations with his wife or another he is considered unclean and does not drink milk until the sun has set the following day. Mr. Heasty could not discover that anyone objected to drinking milk drawn by himself, nor does anyone avoid taking milk and meat together. The pottery vessels used for milk are not used for any other purpose.

A woman cooks for her husband and leaves the hut while he eats, but it is not shameful for men and women to be seen eating together, and after a man has eaten the main part of a meal a woman and her friends, usually her unmarried *nyiwa* (if her *gol* is not distant), may sit and eat while he continues his meal. A newly married couple do not eat together. Small reed mats called *paro* are used to put over pots of food to keep off flies and dust, and out of respect a woman might stand one of these upright to screen her face while eating or drinking.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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763 sound that is prolonged for about ten minutes and is renewed at intervals during the day as relatives or friends of the deceased arrive for the funeral.

[166] I have said previously that the Shilluk are fond of wandering from their own villages. They will settle and live for years at the other end of the country, perhaps among the people of another tribe or in another province. But no matter how long a man has been away from his own people, he will always endeavour to return to die among them, and if he should fall ill whilst away from home he will try to let his kinsfolk know in order that they may come and fetch him, or will have himself carried back. If, however, he should die 766 away from home the news of his death is greeted with the customary wailing, and some member of his family must visit his grave and bring back some of the earth from it; this is buried near the dead man's home and the funeral ceremonies are enacted over it as though the corpse itself were present.

761 It is the Shilluk tradition that the king should not be 682 permitted to die a natural death, but should be ceremoni- [643] ously smothered by his womenfolk. The same is true of a chief, but whether the reasons for the killing in this case are the same as those which decide the death of the king is not clear. Certainly a chief who had been ill for a month and showed no signs of recovery would be speedily put out of the way. [888] The custom seems to extend to other cases too; an old man would be smothered as also would be one suffering from a long and painful illness, and the same is done too, in some cases at least, shortly before death would take place naturally. I myself saw a dying boy being smothered by his own mother. She propped him up between her knees and passed her hand over his nose and mouth. I thought that she was wiping away the mucus that was coming from his nose and mouth, and it was only when he had ceased to breathe that I realized to my horror that she had killed him. When questioned about the reasons for this 'mercy' killing the Shilluk are vague and evasive. They say, for instance, that it is a humiliation for anyone to die naturally.